

Big Canal May Be Completed By 1914

T. S. Andrews Tells Of the Work; Some Statistics

Milwaukee, Wis., April 9.—At present there are 45,000 men employed on the canal, in offices and doing manual labor.

There are 1000 men in hospitals at Ancon and over 300 at Colon; there are 90 nurses at Ancon.

The United States government uses 17 tons of silver each month to pay off the silver employees (Panamanian money) and two tons of gold for gold employees. Over 1,000,000 field ricks were used in one of the big gates at Gatun; there will be 11 gates along the canal.

One million pounds of dynamite are used every month in blasting on the canal.

There are 186 engines in use; 100 steam shovels and 4481 cars.

Butter sells for 40 cents a pound; eggs 31 cents a dozen; coffee 25 cents a pound.

The government baker at Cristobal makes 24,000 loaves of bread daily; capacity 24,000 loaves a day; 4000 rolls daily and 8000 pounds of cakes.

Over 50,000 pounds of coffee is roasted a month at Colon for employees; 250 gallons of ice cream daily, 55 tons of ice made daily.

Government laundry at Colon washes 200,000 pieces every month.

Col. G. W. Goethals predicts that the canal will be completed by the middle of 1914.

The death rate on the canal zone now is no greater than in many of the cities in the states.

The engineers estimate that it will take three years for the big lake above Gatun dam to be filled to the level of the canal. The waters from the Chagres river will be utilized for filling the lake.

The canal will be 1000 feet at the widest point and 110 feet at the narrowest point.

During February, 1910, 1,258,415 cubic yards of earth were taken out at

Culebra cut, the greatest record since the canal was started.

"Would it surprise you if I were to tell you the Panama canal would be completed before the end of 1915," remarked Col. George W. Goethals, head of the engineering work, while discussing the matter with the writer and Dr. E. Drelfus, of New Orleans, at Culebra, canal zone, the latter part of March.

Col. Goethals was assured that it surely would be a surprise, not only to his hearers, but to the great majority of American people, if the big undertaking was finished by that time, whereupon the colonel said: "Well I am sure the American people are in for a surprise, for I honestly believe that the canal will be completed by that time, and if we do not experience any unexpected setbacks, it will be ready early in 1914."

Col. Goethals was enthusiastic over the showing made the past six months at Gatun and Culebra. He figures that the great obstacles, if any occur, will be at Culebra, as the rainy season is liable to cause more landslides, which will necessarily delay the work somewhat. However, the engineering corps has been planning against such setbacks and many of the most dangerous places on the hills along the big cut are being blasted and the earth and rocks hauled away the same as from the bottom of the cut. This procedure will be followed throughout the Culebra cut, so as to prevent any possible interference with the canal proper after it is finished.

Work Progresses Rapidly.

The work on the canal has been progressing very rapidly the past six months, and the excavations are being made at an astonishing rate. It would indeed be a treat to that wonderful French engineer, De Lesseps, could he but return to earth at this time and

witness the immense Bucyrus steam shovels from South Milwaukee digging down into the earth and taking out tons at a time. The writer had the pleasure of visiting the canal just six years ago and can more readily appreciate the progress the Americans have made since the United States government purchased the rights from the French company.

The wonderful strides made by the Americans on the canal were made possible through the more wonderful sanitary improvements brought about by Dr. W. C. Gorgas. It may sound funny to the average American citizen to be told that there are no mosquitoes in Colon or Panama; in fact along the canal zone, but nevertheless it is a fact. There are few flies, too, and only in some of the outlying swamp districts will you find any mosquitoes at all. From a former pesthole the canal zone has been transformed into a very healthy resort as healthy as can be found in the tropical climates. Yellow fever is almost unknown there now and malarial fever is under such control that the doctors do not fear it any more. The death rate on the zone is very small compared to what it used to be. When the French were working the canal the death rate was 25 in every 100, and later 178 in 100. In the year 1909 the death rate among the white laborers was 11 in 1000, the excellent sanitary conditions have made it possible for white men to work on the canal and that is why Col. Goethals is so confident that his work will be ended before 1915.

Americans Visit Canal.

Five or six years ago there were few Americans visiting Panama and the canal, but now, owing to the excellent service established by the United Fruit company, with its fleet of fine big steamships, the Americans are fast finding their way to the canal and adjoining countries. The trip is well worth taking.

At the present time there are 45,000 people employed on the canal proper, that is including office help, etc., but of this number there are about 1000 in the hospitals most of the time, due to accidents, illness, etc. The work is being concentrated just now at Gatun, where the immense dam and locks are being built, at Culebra, where the blasting and digging is going on, and at Pedro Miguel, where locks are also being erected. An idea of what is going on may be gained when it is known that there are 186 engines at work; 106 steam shovels, mostly of the Bucyrus type, and 4481 cars in service hauling away the debris, and all within a radius of about 25 miles. Of course the hauling is mostly done from Culebra cut, thousands upon thousands of carloads being dumped at Balboa, for the breakwater, and at Miraflores.

At Culebra they have 85 feet to go down yet before reaching the low level of the canal and at the rate they are going down now it will not be two years before they are near the goal. Most of the canal is at its proper level now, Culebra being the one point where the digging must continue. At Gatun concrete work is being rushed to completion by Col. W. F. Siebert, while the steel work is being pushed by J. R. Goodwin, representative of the United States Steamship company. The strength of the dam and steel structures at this point may be realized when it is considered that there are 1000,000 rivets in just one of the big gates here. It is expected to have the Gatun dam far advanced by this summer to permit the filling of the big lake at this point, that is the starting of it, for the engineers estimate that it will take three years to bring the lake up to the scheduled level for the canal. They are putting in 2000 to 3000 yards of concrete a day at Gatun.

The Hospitals.

The hospitals at Ancon, on the Pacific side of the canal, are located at

Ancon, high above the city of Panama, where a fine breeze is always blowing from the ocean. At present there are 1000 patients in the hospitals and 30 nurses in charge. Eleven doctors handle the work. At Colon hospital there are about 400 patients and about 35 nurses with seven doctors. The buildings are located on the beach and a cool breeze is always to be had there.

All the hotels and eating houses on the zone are supplied from the commissary stores of the United States government, and the big bakery at Cristobal, Colon furnishes all the bread cakes, etc. At present 24,000 loaves are baked daily and 9000 pounds of cake.

Even the laundry work is done by the government laundry, over 500,000 pieces being handled every month.

The Y. M. C. A. has established quarters at Colon, Culebra and Ancon and have gymnasiums and bowling alleys of the latest pattern, being supplied by the Brunswick-Collender company, and match games are of daily occurrence.

Week at Canal Zone.

After a week's stay at the canal the United States Fruit company's boat sails for Port Limon, Costa Rica, and other stop on the way to New Orleans. One day is put in here, and if the travelers want to remain over one boat they can take in San Jose up in the mountains, a most beautiful city, where the new opera house costing \$3,000,000 can be seen. If there for a day only a trip to Zent, about 20 miles through banana plantations can be taken, where tropical life at its best can be enjoyed. Bananas, raisins, however, is becoming more of a science now, for it has been found necessary to plow up the fields and replant them. At Zent the United Fruit company has plowed up 2500 acres of this year and will follow along that line for some years, until the entire district has been replanted. At Cherokee Grande, a former big banana district, it was found necessary to abandon it entirely for the time being.

It was a rather remarkable coincidence that on the steamer Turrialba, captain Clark in charge, there were no other stop on the way to New Orleans.

Mr. and Mrs. Faro, of Lake Mills; Mr. and Mrs. Millard, of Port Washington; J. J. Maple and son, of Milwaukee; Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Pike, of Milwaukee; and T. S. Andrews and wife.

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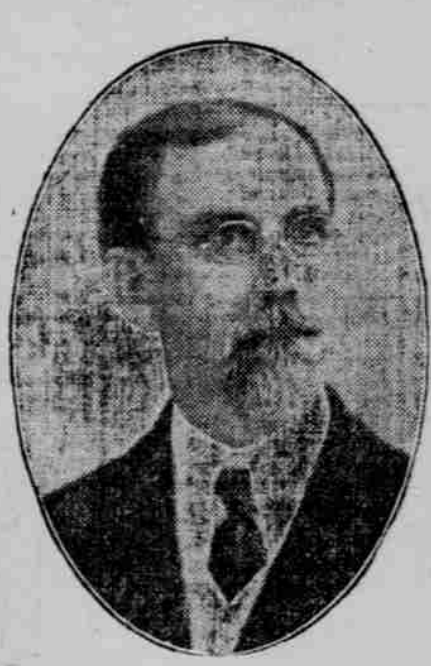
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